DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 030 849

AL 001 806

By-Mattran, Kenneth J.

Adult English as a Second Language Program in Chicago.

Pub Date 7 Mar 69

Note-13p.; Paper given at the Third Annual TESOL Convention, Chicago, Illinois, March 7, 1969.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.75

Descriptors-*Adult Education, *English (Second Language), *Extension Education, Immigrants, *Language Instruction, Program Evaluation, Teacher Qualifications, Teaching Methods, *Urban Education

Identifiers-*Chicago Board of Education Americanization Div

If only ten percent of the total estimated non-English-speaking potential of the Chicago area were actually non-functional in English, there would be some 40,000 people in need of English language training. In investigating to what degree this obvious need is being met, the writer was surprised to discover that some, including teachers, question the need for classes at all--"Can't people learn the language through experience with media and/or public contact?" The immigrant, he points out, unlike an American residing temporarily abroad, needs to survive in a culture that is articulated by the English language. That society must provide instruction for newcomers in the language of the people as part of the total educational scheme. The largest program for adult learners of English as a second language in the Chicago area is run by the Americanization Division of the Bureau of Education Extension of the Chicago Board of Education. More than 10,000 persons attend classes in some 400 centers in schools, churches, neighborhood houses, settlement houses, libraries, and 32 industrial firms. The writer discusses the "superb" overall organization of the program, and offers suggestions for overcoming the weaknesses in the areas of methodology, curriculum structure and development (including specific English objectives), and teacher qualification and training. (AMM)

ED030849

TESOL Conference
Chicago, Illinois
March 7, 1969

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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ADULT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN CHICAGO

Kenneth J. Mattran
English Language Institute
Central YMCA Community College
Chicago, Illinois

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ADULT ESL PROGRAMS IN CHICAGO

The title of this paper, and the description in your program, imply that this talk will deal primarily with a listing of the agencies that engage in the activity of teaching English as a second language, and some statement of how well they do the job. That is accurate to a degree; however, the title could better have been listed as "The Education of Hyman Kaplan Revisited," because as I carried out research for the paper, I found that parallels between adult ESL program in this metropolitan area and the fictional "American Night Preparatory School for Adults" kept coming to my attention. I learned that Leo Rosten's very entertaining stories of immigrants learning English were actually drawn from his experiences in teaching English as a second language in Chicago, although the locale was changed to New York in the stories.

I will not, in this paper, attempt to deal at length with all of the existing classes offered by all of the various agencies in this part of the Republic. I will, instead, direct most of my remarks toward the largest single program in the area because the best potential for service to the non-English speaking minorities in this area exists in the wide program administered by the Chicago Board of Education. Nonetheless, since this is a survey of programs for ESL for adults, I will list some of the organizations through which English classes are being offered to adult speakers of other languages. I shall ignore intensive programs designed basically for non-immigrant status students who are college bound.

At first glance, one could conclude that Chicago does well by its non-English speaking population; and it does, at least in the sense that there are a lot of classes being offered in the city and

its suburbs. YMCA's and YWCA's offer classes through their adult education programs in several locations throughout the city. Some suburban high schools conduct classes in their adult education curriculums. Junior Colleges such as Loop (of Chicago City College) and my own Central YMCA Community College run respectable programs for adults who wish to learn the English language.

In all, there are more than 420 separate centers where English is taught as a second tongue. The great majority of classes are conducted without cost to the student while some such as Loop and the Y's charge a small fee, and others like the English Language Institute of the Central YMCA Community College charge substantial fees for their services.

The largest program for adult learners of English as a second language is that carried on by the Americanization Division, of the Bureau of Education Extension, of the Chicago Board of Education. This division of the Board conducts classes in approximately 400 centers throughout the city in schools, churches, neighborhood houses, settlement houses and libraries. In addition to that, the Board provides classes in thirty-two industrial firms in the area. More than 10,000 individuals are registered in classes each year in the Americanization program, so this program overshadows all others combined, at least in the sheer weight of numbers of people served.

The overall administrative structure of the Americanization division provides an ideal setting in which the teaching of English as a second language can be committed. The number of individual centers, the division of the programs into three geographical areas each with a TESL supervisor, and the fact that the classes are free to students are the most attractive aspects of the program.

These factors would be attractive for any program in a large metropolitan area. Furthermore, the policy of organizing a class when requested by a group of at least fifteen people allows for great flexibility in the development of classes in relation to the need for such classes. These are indeed impressive statistics; but how do they compare with the numbers of speakers of other languages who now live here?

The question is a difficult one to answer because there is no way of determining exactly what the non-English speaking population is. The available figures concerning immigration do not break down into the languages spoken by the immigrants ... the figures only go so far as showing country of origin. One can merely guess from the data released each year by the United States Immigration and Naturalization service through its Alien Address program what numbers of residents do not speak our language. These figures show that as of January, 1967 (the most recent publication), Illinois claimed 213,104 resident aliens. According to my informant at the Immigration Service, the great majority of individuals reporting under the registration law reside in the environs of Chicago. Of the Illinois total, only 31,540 of those residents emmigrated from countries where English is either the native language or is used as the official language. Add to the foregoing figures the numbers of Spanish speaking citizens of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American origin, presently estimated to be as high as a quarter of a million people, and you have a very significant non-English speaking potential. If, for example, only ten per cent of the total estimated non-English speaking potential of the Chicago area were actually non-functional in English, there would be some 40,000 people who are in need of some English language training. Ten per cent is a very conservative figure, and an

arbitrary one, but the concern of this paper precludes non-speakers under the age of seventeen, the legal cut-off in Illinois for compulsory school attendance.

My estimate of 40,000 should not be interpreted as anything other than foxy conjecture because no matter how I tried, I could find no way to estimate with accuracy the number of non-English speakers in this community. In my attempt to ascertain a reasonable figure of non-English speakers, I contacted, among others, the foreign language press of the city and learned that there are more than twenty-five foreign language newspapers published here. I thought that the readership of the ethnic press would give some indication of the size of the non-English speaking community, but the newspaper figures were not particularly helpful. Nonetheless, they were fascinating so I will pass them along to you for whatever they are worth. Among the twenty-five or so papers, there are dailies published in German, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Yiddish, Lithuanian, Chinese, Slovenian, and of course, Spanish. The combined readership claimed by just five of these dailies is a whopping three-quarters of a million. How many of these readers are entirely dependent on their foreign language press for their news cannot be determined, and Mr. Larsen of the American Foreign Language Newspaper Agency would not even hazard a guess.

It would not be prudent, I believe, to try to draw any conclusions from the Immigration and ethnic press data as regards the quantitative need for ESL classes in this area ... any imperative conclusions, that is. However, there is an obvious need for classes in ESL and the need is being met to some degree by existing programs, but it would be nice to know to what degree the need is being met.

There is no point in dwelling further on the quantity of ESL programs. As I mentioned earlier, the present system is expandable as a matter of policy.

I was surprised to discover while carrying out research that some, teachers included, wonder why even bother with classes at all. Can't people learn the language through experience with media and/or public contact? I heard stories of immigrant forebears who, without benefit of TEFL, TESL, TESOL, or TOEFL learned to use the English language with accuracy and reasonable fluency. My own paternal grandmother, an illiterate, learned English through osmosis and there was hardly a trace of first language influence in her American speech. How long it took her to begin to use her new language, however, does not give witness to the efficiency of the "osmotic" method. My late father was well into his teens before Grandma could converse with native speakers without the interpretive skills of someone standing by to help her. Today, one cannot afford to take a decade or two to learn our tongue if one is going to survive in this society. I believe this to be true in spite of the fact that an immigrant can usually find newspapers printed in his own language, radio and often TV programs in his own language, grocery stores and restaurants catering to his particular tastes, and a culture little different from his own within our culture.

An immigrant to these pavements is not like an American residing temporarily abroad. The immigrant needs to survive in an economy that uses English to conduct its business; his children must attend school where English is the medium of instruction. In short, he must participate in a culture that is articulated by the English language, and for his own sake as well as the sake of the society, he must

participate in the culture for the better part of each day of his life here. That society must provide, to the best of its ability and resources, instruction for newcomers in the language of the people, and that instruction must be part of the total educational scheme. Furthermore, this aspect of the educational scheme cannot be thrown together wily-nily, emphasizing form rather than substance. In other words, an organizational superstructure is fine, but not as an educational goal. We must provide something better than Hyman Kaplan's "American Night Preparatory School for Adults".

Entertaining though the Hyman Kaplan stories were, they were in one way very negative. Through two volumes covering approximately two school years, Mr. Kaplan and his peers showed no improvement in their English language skills. I do not believe that this was due to ignorance on the part of Kaplan (he was anything but ignorant), nor due to his magnificent insouciance when confronted with a grammatical principle by Mr. Parkhill, the teacher. My feeling is that Mr. Parkhill was to blame because he was <u>not</u> a teacher of English as a second language, and that the curriculum in the school was, in modern parlance, irrelevant. Whatever English the students in Mr. Parkhill's beginning grade learned, they learned before they began their schooling.

Before I go on, there are three assumptions that underly my further comments. The assumptions are not of my own creation, and they form much of the basic philosophy of modern teaching of English as a foreign or second language. They are:

1. The linguistic approach to foreign language teaching is presently superior to all other approaches. This method is often called the oral/aural or audio-lingual method, but

the latter terms are frequently used very loosely to describe myriad approaches, only one of which, the linguistic, incorporates what Lado calls the "powerful idea of pattern practice". [1]

2. ESL curriculums need to be well-organized and graded, and clearly defined linguistic objectives should be established for each level of instruction.
3. Teachers of English as a second language should have training in the teaching of English as a second language. It must be realized that as Prof. Harold Allen said at the 1967 TESOL convention that "the teaching of English as a second language is a professional skill requiring professional training and competence in linguistics and in methods and in materials".

In other words, Mr. Parkhill needs to go to school.

I have alluded to Leo Rosten's "American Night Preparatory School for Adults" on several occasions, and I mentioned that this school was modeled after a school in Chicago ... a part of the Americanization Program. I also stated that I found many parallels between existing adult ESL programs and the fictional institution. From this point on I should like to discuss only the Americanization program because it is the largest agency now working with immigrant non-speakers, and because the existing structure provides the greatest potential for service. Some of my remarks will be critical of the system, but they may, in some small way, be helpful.

There are, as I perceive, some very important weaknesses in the Americanization program, specifically in its function as a TESL agency. (The program also deals with citizenship training, etc.)

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1. Lado, Robert <u>Language Teaching</u> (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1964), p.6.

There are great strengths as well.

First, the strong aspects of the program. The overall organization of the program is superb: Classes are held in centers that are convenient to the immigrant community and at hours that seem convenient to the majority of the people. The distribution of administrative responsibility over three areas, each with a TESL supervisor, makes for efficient administration of the programs. Classes are offered free of charge, and that is in line with the best educational traditions of this country. Finally, classes can be organized when requested by a group of fifteen. These to me are very strong points.

On the other hand, the weaknesses of the program are many, but tend to be lost in the glow of the brilliant organizational structure of the program. In relation to the three criteria stated earlier, the shortcomings of the program lie in the areas of

a) TESL methodology

b) curriculum structure and development including specific ESL objectives, and

c) teacher qualifications and training.

In conversations with people responsible for the program and with people who have taught in the program I learned that no set method was employed in the classes. Each teacher was left pretty much to his or her own devices in methods and materials. Some described the approach as audio-lingual, others as the direct approach, and still others had no definitions to offer at all. In any case, there is no consistency in methods and materials in the division. At this point I must admit that I spoke to a rather small sampling of individuals connected with the program and visited no classes. However, I believe my criticism has reasonable validity because I

spoke to the director of the program, an area supervisor, three teachers in the program, and several community leaders from the Spanish-speaking areas of the city who corroborated these remarks.

In regard to curriculum, I found that an unrealistic objective applied to the entire program and that objective was not an ESL objective. Instead, the goal is eighth grade equivalency and an equivalency certificate is awarded. For the certificate, a person must demonstrate competence in math and civics as well as English, but I could get no firm statement as to the degree of English language competence required.

Along with the unrealistic goals, unrealistic in the sense that they apply to all who enter the program regardless of previous education, the manner of class registration and the organization of the school calendar tend to weaken, if not completely destroy, the classroom continuity so necessary to effective TESL. Classes begin in September and end in June and students are allowed to enroll at any time during the session. It has been reported that it is not too unusual for a given class to change its character radically within a school year.

Finally, the matter of teacher qualification for ESL classes in the Americanization Program leaves much to be desired. Presently, all that is required of a teacher is that the teacher hold a teaching certificate issued by the Board of Education. The certificate may be either permanent or temporary. My criticism is not that a certificate is required, but concerns the requirement for obtaining a certificate. All that is needed for a temporary certificate, other than the BA of course, is fifteen hours in education courses. That in itself is

not within my purview to critize; however, a person who is otherwise qualified to teach English as a foreign language or second language either through formal training or experience, cannot teach in the program without the fifteen hours. This would exclude most people who are now taking MA's in TESL and others such as returned Peace Corps volunteers. There are not nearly enough qualified TESL's around, especially looking for part-time employment, and I do not see the logic in turning a qualified individual away because of the lack of a few education courses.

I do not wish to be guilty of offering criticism without suggesting solutions; so I submit the following as possible alternatives to the present system. I realize, by the way, that it is very easy to stand here and make proposals in the abstract without having to consider the administrative and logistic problems arising from implementation of such proposals.

In terms of methodology and materials, I would suggest that a uniform approach be developed throughout the system over a period of time, possibly with the aid of TESL consultants from outside the system. Maybe even this organization of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages could establish a consultant program similar to that offered by the Field Service Program of the National Association of Foreign Student Affairs. [2]

Along with the development of a uniform approach to methods and materials, I would suggest that specific ESL objectives be set up throughout the system and that meeting these goals be given priority over any other goals of the Americanization Program ... priority that is, in time. I would further suggest that the linguistic objectives

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2 The NAFSA Field Service Program, through State Department Funds, provides consultant service in TESL and other areas of concern to those who work with foreign students. In-service training grants are provided to individuals through the Program as well.

be stated in terms of oral English initially with reading and writing skills attended to later.

The calendar, and the present open registration policy, might well be changed to allow for classroom continuity. Perhaps dividing the academic year into two, three, or four terms with enrollment restricted to the beginning of each term would contribute to classroom stability, especially if a specific linguistic objective for each class level were to be aimed at.

Teacher qualifications could be adjusted so that people qualified through training and/or experience, but who do not meet the education hour requirement, could teach classes in the programs. Furthermore, a long-term goal might be to have all teachers in the program receive training in the teaching of English as a second language. In-service workshops and institutes could be set up for people now teaching English as a second language classes, or teachers could be encouraged to take classes in TESL at area colleges. For the not too distant future, at least one three-hour class in TESL methods and materials should be the minimum requirement for anyone teaching in the program, whether or not the present fifteen hours of education be retained as a certification requirement.

I have refrained from being more specific in these proposals because much study would need to be done before any determination could be made regarding the types of materials best suited to the students in the program, what types of examinations could best be employed, and what red tape would need to be cut to implement change.

In conclusion, a presentation restricted to twenty minutes can do very little but generalize on a topic such as this, and

generalization leaves too many questions unasked and unanswered. I have, through necessity, given only superficial attention to private programs, suburban schools, and TV programs in ESL. But, hopefully, some of the remarks in this paper might apply elsewhere. I know that some have applied to the program for which I am responsible. What I attempted to do was, in some small way, stimulate greater interest in public programs in English as a second language for adults, hoping that someday the same excellence that exists in English language institutes in many colleges and universities will exist as well in the area of ESL for adults, and that "The Education of Hyman Kaplan" will be moved from the "materials and methods" shelf back to its proper place.

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